

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STOCKH 03351 300858Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ACDA-12 CIAE-00 INR-10 IO-13 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 EB-08 NRC-05 OES-09 SOE-02 DODE-00
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C O N F I D E N T I A L STOCKHOLM 3351

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: TECH, ENRG, PINT, SW
SUBJ: INTRA-COALITION NEGOTIATIONS BEGIN OVER FUTURE OF
RINGHALS 3 AND FORSMARK 1 NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS

REF: STOCKHOLM 3136

1. WITH SUMMER HOLIDAYS CONCLUDED AND GOS FULLY FUNCTIONING,
PRIME MINISTER FALLDIN AND HIS COALITION COLLEAGUES FACE
ALMOST IMMEDIATELY A NEED TO AGREE ON THE FATE OF TWO RECENTLY
COMPLETED NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS (RINGHALS 3 AND FORSMARK 1).
FROM SEVERAL ASPECTS, THE NEGOTIATIONS NOW UNDERWAY BETWEEN THE
ANTI-NUCLEAR ENERGY CENTER PARTY UNDER FALLDIN, ON THE ONE
HAND, AND THE PRO-NUCLEAR MODERATE AND LIBERAL PARTIES ON THE
OTHER REPRESENT THE MOST SEVERE INTERNAL TEST YET FACED BY
THIS GOVERNMENT. THE PUBLIC STATEMENTS OF MODERATE PARTY CHAIR-
MAN GOSTA BOHMAN AND LIBERAL PARTY CHAIRMAN OLA ULLSTEN THIS
WEEK CONTINUE TO REFLECT UNDILUTED CONVICTION THAT THE OWNERS
OF BOTH PLANTS HAVE FULLY SATISFIED STIPULATIONS OF THE CON-
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PAGE 02 STOCKH 03351 300858Z

DITITIONS ACT REGARDING THE STORAGE OF WASTE FUEL. BOTH INSIST
THAT THE GOVERNMENT PROCEED QUICKLY TO AUTHORIZE THE LOADING
AND OPERATION OF BOTH PLANTS. BOTH INTIMATE THAT THERE IS
LITTLE ROOM FOR COMPROMISE AND THAT A GOVERNMENT CRISIS AS A
RESULT OF CENTER PARTY OBSTINANCY CANNOT BE EXCLUDED. THEIR
ADAMANCY IS MATCHED ON THE OTHER SIDE BY CENTER PARTY OFFICIALS
WHO, OVER THE LAST SEVERAL WEEKS, HAVE INDICATED THAT THEIR

OPPOSITION TO RINGHALS 3 AND FORSMARK 1 REMAINS, BASED UPON A CONVICTION BY FALLDIN, MINISTER OF ENERGY OLOF JOHANSSON AND OTHER THAT THE SAFETY OF THE NUCLEAR WASTE DISPOSAL SCHEMES PUT FORTH BY THE PLANT OWNERS CANNOT BE DEMONSTRATED SATISFACTORILY. ALL THREE PARTY LEADERS PROFESS A DISTASTE FOR A COMPROMISE BASED ON NARROW POLITICAL PARTY CONSIDERATIONS AND ALL ALLUDE TO THE CRUCIAL IMPORTANCE OF A GOVERNMENT DECISION TO THE FUTURE OF SWEDISH INDUSTRY AND THE ECONOMY IN GENERAL. THE EMBASSY HAS BEEN TOLD THAT THE NEGOTIATIONS NOW UNDER WAY ARE THE MOST SENSITIVE CONCEIVABLE AND THAT AN "IRON CURTAIN OF SECRECY" SURROUNDS THE DELIBERATIONS.

COMMENT: THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT THAT SOME KIND OF DECISION MUST BE REACHED OVER THE NEXT FEW WEEKS AND THAT THE POSITIONS OF THE PARTIES ARE SUFFICIENTLY INFLEXIBLE IN APPEARANCE TO MAKE A GOVERNMENT CRISIS POSSIBLE. AMONG THE INGREDIENTS IN THIS HIGHLY CHARGED ATMOSPHERE ARE (A) A REALIZATION BY ALL CONCERNED THAT SOME AGREED SOLUTION TO THE NUCLEAR ENERGY ISSUE IS ESSENTIAL TO PRESERVE THE COALITION AND (B) A HARD-LINE STANCE VIS-A-VIS THE COALITION PARTNERS IS A TACTICALLY USEFUL DEVICE TO ENSURE AGAINST EXCESSIVE CONCESSION TO ONE'S OPPONENTS. THE LATTER MAY HAVE LED TO IMPLICIT IF NOT EXPLICIT THREATS TO RESIGN OR TAKE OTHER EXTREME ACTION IN A POLITICAL GAME OF CHICKEN, ALL COUCHED IN A FRAMEWORK OF WILLINGNESS TO ACHIEVE AN AGREED SOLUTION. GIVEN THE WIDE GAP BETWEEN POSITIONS AND THE SENSITIVITY OF THE ISSUE, IT
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PAGE 03 STOCKH 03351 300858Z

IS CONCEIVEABLE THAT A MISCALCULATION COULD BE MADE OR TEMPER ALLOWED TO PREDOMINATE RESULTING IN A FALL OF THE GOVERNMENT.

3. NEVERTHELESS, THE NEED TO REACH A COMPROMISE TO PRESERVE THE COALITION WILL, IN EMBASSY VIEW, PREDOMINATE IN THE END AND ENSURE THAT SOME KIND OF SOLUTION BE FOUND. THE PARTY LEADERS CLEARLY SEE THIS NEED AND ARE TAKING PAINS TO ALLOW SOME LINE OF RETREAT TO THE BEST COMPROMISE THEY CAN GET. THERE ARE INTIMATIONS OF THIS IN THE PRESS AND THE CAREFULLY WEIGHTED PUBLIC STATEMENTS OF THE PRINCIPAL FIGURES. AMBASSADOR WACHTMEISTER INFORMED THE AMBASSADOR ON AUGUST 27 THAT HE HAD BEEN TOLD RECENTLY BY FALLDIN THAT A SOLUTION WOULD BE FOUND WHICH WOULD NEITHER VIOLATE HIS SENSE OF PRINCIPLE NOR CAUSE THE GOVERNMENT TO FALL.
KENNEDY-MINOTT

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